

The Status Report

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We would like to thank the following Representatives for their support of House Amendment #790.

THANK YOU!

Representative Bruce J. Ayers
Representative Ruth B. Balser
Representative Carlo P. Basile
Representative John J. Binienda
Representative Bill Bowles
Representative Michael Brady
Representative Katherine Clark
Representative Lori Ehrlich
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Representative John F. Quinn
Representative Michael F. Rush
Representative Frank Israel Smizik
Representative A. Stephen Tobin
Representative Martha M. Walz
Representative Alice K. Wolf

If you see your Representative on the list above, please call him or her today and thank them for acknowledging the importance of having a permanent and effective voice for the women of the Commonwealth.

Chair Swiston Keynotes Women's Career Panel

On April 1st, Chair Greer Tan Swiston presented, along with four other distinguished panelist, at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston "Women's Career Panel" as part of the bank's Diversity in the Workplace lunch time series for bank employees. All panelist agreed that working to achieve a work-life balance is a life long pursuit and that many women deploy unique strategies along the way achieve success. When asked about her greatest professional accomplishments, Chair Swiston replied "I get to do it all—career fulfillment and family". Other panelist encouraged women in the audience to "have the courage to do something new", "always convince others you can do it!" and "being flexible, continue to learn new skills" as the key survival strategy in these tough economic times.

This event was an opportunity for accomplished professional women from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, representing a wide age range and cultural backgrounds to share their career stories and to join in celebrating women's professional achievements.



*Cambridge City Councillor Marjorie Decker and
MCSW Chair Greer Swiston*

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Executive Director Corner

Sometimes challenges and threats present the biggest opportunities and greatest surprises. We have all seen this formula at work during a natural disaster where neighbors pull one another from a pile of rubble. Crisis can bring out the best in people and encourages all of us to think about how we can be the change we want to see in this world.

As many Commission supporters and readers of the Status Report know by now, the Commission is struggling financially. However, I wanted to share that the groundswell of support, from all corners of the Commonwealth, has been astounding: clearly the Commission's work remains important to many, is valued by service delivery programs and providers who rely on the advocacy conducted on their behalf and is recognized by many legislators who stepped up and co-signed an amendment restoring funding to the House budget. We are grateful to every organization that passed along our urgent call to action, every person who took the time to call their Representative and to every legislator who champions the notion that a women's Commission makes Massachusetts a better place to live and work.



Kira Dunn, Executive Director

Earlier this year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pointed out that if we are to build a stronger, more secure and prosperous world, everyone must be granted an equal seat at the table. Marginalized groups, particularly women, bring to these international, national, and local level discussions a wealth of expertise, experience and innovative ideas. A common desire for a safer and healthier Commonwealth will require the talents of every citizen. Including more women in solution-building isn't the right thing to do because of some abstract moral imperative but rather because women represent a talent pool that likely will contribute a key idea, or an expanded viewpoint or a significant burst of new strategic planning.

Last month President Obama convened a White House Council on Women and Girls to address gender and public policy matters and last week Massachusetts Senate President Therese Murray called for more women in government and business. Today, we have received your calls and emails. To be the change we want to see, the Commission remains committed to its mission and vision for women as full participants in developing our community, and with your support, we will continue working towards this ambitious goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kira Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Kira Dunn, Executive Director

Job Classification Study Approved

Pay Equity has long been a key priority for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. Beginning in 2007, working with a coalition of organizations, the MCSW supported the "An Act Authorizing the HRD to undertake a Study of the State's Jobs Classification Systems" sponsored by Senator Chandler and Representative Wolf. The bill was not passed at the end of last session and was re-filed during the 2009-2010 session.

The Executive Office for Administration and Finance has recognized the need for the study and without the mandate of legislation, has committed to undertaking a review of the job specifications used by the Executive Branch. The MCSW is pleased by this commitment as it views the job classification study as an important step in the path towards pay equality for all.

The State of Minnesota, after completing a job classification study twenty years ago, was able to ensure that women who work for the state earn 97 cents for every dollar men make. The Commission looks forward to supporting the Administration in this study and creating a model for businesses across the Commonwealth.

Equal Pay Day Recognized on April 28th

On April 28th “Equal Pay Day” red was worn to symbolize how far women and minorities are “in the red” with their pay. Equal Pay Day is the annual day that women must work into the following year to earn what their male counterparts did the previous year. This day is commemorated every year to recognize the fact that women are not being paid the same as men for equal work.

DID YOU KNOW:

- According to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, women in Massachusetts are among the most educated in the nation and rank in the highest percentage of those working in professional occupations, yet the Commonwealth ranks 39th in the country for its earning ratio (women as compared to men.)
- The Center for Women’s Health and Human Rights reports that the average weekly salary for a woman in Massachusetts is only \$666, while a man’s is \$842. This impacts a woman’s ability to be economically self-sufficient and limits access to education, healthcare, childcare, housing, investments and retirement.

IN RESPONSE, THE MCSW HAS ENDORSED:

- *An Act Further Defining Comparable Work (S689/H1880)* sponsored by Senator Jehlen and Representative Wolf. This legislation defines comparable work as “solely based on whether the two positions entail comparable skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions between employees of the opposite sex.”
- *An Act to Authorize the Human Resources Division to Undertake a Study of the State’s Job Classification System (S1408/H2665)* sponsored by Senator Chandler and Representative Wolf. This bill requires the Human Resources Division (HRD) to conduct an analysis study of state employees of the executive branch to update the current job classification system and review class titles, job specifications, organizational relationships and job qualifications to insure that employee compensation, pensions, and benefits are free from gender and racial bias. It also establishes a Workforce Advisory Council of experts to assist the human resources division with this work.

Eliminating the gender wage gap benefits women, families and the Commonwealth by increasing household income, decreasing poverty rates and boosting savings and pensions. Support for closing the wage gap is encouraged and welcomed at every level. Get involved by contacting your state legislators and asking them to support the current bills. Also visit <http://www.mass.gov/women/payequity.htm> to join the Massachusetts Coalition for Women’s Wage Equity.

Domestic Violence Death Spurs Foundation

At the age of 25, just shy of finishing her Masters degree, Tiana Notice tragically became a victim of domestic violence. Tiana knew what she needed to do to protect herself and took many steps including contacting law enforcement agents and installing a camera in her garage. So what happened? Tiana’s father, Alvin, said, “My daughter did a lot to protect herself—the system failed her.”

And he would know. Mr. Notice is a 27-year veteran employee of the Massachusetts Department of Correction and currently serves as a Deputy Superintendent, working everyday with offenders and believes that a gap in understanding domestic violence is part of the system failure. “Many of the laws in Massachusetts are good, but people just don’t know about them,” Mr. Notice said. In response, Mr. Notice and his family, through a foundation set up to honor Tiana, have started a Speaker Bureau with the main goal of discussing domestic violence prevention, sharing information throughout the system aimed at preventing violence and strategizing on reaching young people in schools and on sports teams and, those working within the legislative and judiciary branches of government.

As a parent of a victim and as a veteran state employee working with perpetrators of violence, Mr. Notice brings a unique perspective: he sees where domestic violence education and awareness campaigns are needed throughout the system and he knows how domestic violence can impact a family and community. “Discussing domestic violence is difficult for police, families, judges, everyone. Anytime we talk, it saves a life”.

If you are a legislator, judge, or coach and would like to arrange a speaking engagement with Mr. Notice please contact him at HonorTianaNotice@gmail.com.

For more information on the foundation honoring Tiana, go to <http://memorialwebsites.legacy.com/TianaNotice/homepage.aspx>.

Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in organizations focusing on women's issues across the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place in the coming weeks.

Saturday, May 9 (9:30 a.m. registration; 10:00 a.m. walk) Walk for the Girls

Location: Girls Inc. of Lynn (88 Broad Street, Lynn)

Details: Join the Girls Inc. of Lynn in a walk to help raise the much needed funds for the completion of the new headquarters facility. Participants are asked to raise a minimum of \$25.00 in donor support. Walk occurs rain or shine. For more information please visit www.girlsinlynn.org.

Sunday, May 10 (7:00 a.m. registration, 8:30 a.m. walk) 13th Annual Mother's Walk for Peace

Location: Field's Corner (Dorchester)

Details: Join Jim Braude of WTKK Radio and NECN, Margery Eagan of WTKK Radio and The Boston Herald, Elected officials, Youth Workers, Young People, The Faith Community, Survivors, and The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute in a 3.6 mile walk in support of families statewide who have lost loved ones to violence. Suggested fundraising goal is \$100.00 per walker. For additional information and to register please visit www.louisdbrownpeaceinstitute.org.

Wednesday, May 13 (1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.): Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts

Location: Massachusetts State House (Boston)

Details: The MCSW will honor Unsung Heroines from across the Commonwealth who *don't make the news, but make the difference*. Due to space restrictions at the State House Great Hall, this is a ticketed event for honorees and their guests. Full event coverage will be available after the event. For more details, please visit www.mass.gov/women/unsungheroines.htm.

Sunday, June 7 (7:30 a.m. - 1:30p.m.): 24th AIDS Walk Boston 2009

Location: DCR Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade (Boston)

Details: Participate in AIDS Walk Boston, a grassroots community event benefiting the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts. This 6.2 mile walk raises money and support for AAC's programs, services and prevention efforts and to increase awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Massachusetts. For more information visit http://www.aac.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AIDSWALK_homepage.

Thursday, June 11 (7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.): Workplace Wellness Breakfast

Location: Sheraton Framingham (Framingham)

Details: The Massachusetts Health Council Annual Meeting will present the business case for change by presenting data on the cost-effectiveness of developing a workplace wellness program and present actual programs that have been working for companies. They will also be honoring Representative Peter Koutoujian for his appointment as Chairman on Financial Services and thanking and honoring him for his many years of serving as Chairman of the Committee on Public Health. Member tickets are \$35, non-member tickets are \$45. For additional information and registration please visit www.mahealthcouncil.org

June 26-28, 2009: 23rd Annual Summer Institute

Location: Bentley University (Waltham)

Details: Please join the Women's Institute for Leadership Development for their Summer Institute for an inspirational weekend that provides women with the leadership vision, confidence and skills to become more effective leaders and organizers in the Massachusetts labor movement. Tuition is \$220 and includes a double room, meals and materials for the weekend. For additional information please visit www.wildlabor.org.

For even more upcoming events please visit our online calendar at www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm.

Do you have an event you would like to see on this list in an upcoming issue of The Status Report? E-mail the details to Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us and we will do our best to include your event in our next issue and/or on the MCSW's website calendar.

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**Do you have questions or comments about this
newsletter? If so, please contact**

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Member of the

